

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 06929 150748Z

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5895

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAMA

S E C R E T AMMAN 6929

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MSS JO US BA

SUBJ: TALK WITH KING-BAHRAIN ARMS PURCHASE

1. SUMMARY: KING HUSSEIN CALLED ME EARLY EVEING OCTOBER 14 AND ASKED TO SEE ME RIGHT AWAY. WHAT WAS ON HIS MIND WAS REQUEST FROM BAHRAIN SULTAN FOR ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE IN DEALING WITH US FOR PURCHASE (POSSIBLY UNDER FMS CREDIT FROM US) OF HELICOPTERS FOR BAHRAIN AIR WING. BAHRAIN WANTS SIX OR EIGHT HEAVY LIFT HELICOPTERS OF TYPE JORDAN EVENTUALLY BUYS, PLUS EVENTUALLY FEW GUNSHIPS. KING ASKED THAT I BRING THIS REQUEST AND ONE SEPTTEL FOR OMAN TO YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION. END SUMMARY.

2. KING EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD JUST FINISHED A VISIT HERE WITH BAHRAIN CROWN PRINCE, BASIC PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO OBTAIN JORDAN ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN ACQUIRING HELICOPTERS AND TRAINING FOR BAHRAIN AIR WING. AFTER DISCUSSION, BAHRAIN HAD DECIDED TO PURCHASE A FEW LARGE HELICOPTERS RATHER THAN LARGER NUMBER OF SMALL ONES IN ORDER TO MOVE FORCES RAPIDLY TO DEFEND ISLAND STATE AND SURROUNDING INLETS. BAHRAIN WANTED TO PURCHASE SAME EQUIPMENT AS JORDAN (GOJ HAS BEEN TAKING WITH SIKORSKY AND BOEING WITH IT BEING OUR IMPRESSION THAT FORMER IS FAVORED SOURCE) SAUDIS HAD BEEN APPROACHED FOR ASSISTANCE IN PURCHASE BUT DALLEYED SO LONG THAT BAHRAIN NOW PREPARED TO GO AHEAD ON ITS OWN.

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COULD NOT GET UP ENOUGH CASH FOR A PURCHASE THAT LARGE AND WOULD

THEREFORE HAVE TO STRETCH OUT MUCH NEEDED BUY OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. KING ASKED IF WE COULD THEREFORE PROVIDE FMS CREDIT TO BAHRAIN FOR SUCH A PURCHASE IN ONE LUMP.

3. I TOLD KING THAT IT WAS A COMPLICATED QUESTION AND I WOULD HAVE TO PUT IT ALL UP TO WASHINGTON AND SEEK AN ANSWER FOR HIM TO COMMUNICATE BACK TO BAHRAIN. IN ADDITION, I ASKED IF BAHRAIN WAS PREPARED TO APPROACH US DIRECTLY IN MANAMA, AND IF SO THAT WAS BEST AND MOST EXPEDITIOUS ROUTE FOR A FIRM OPINION. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THEY WERE BUT STILL ASKED IF I COULD GET A REACTION FROM WASHINGTON TO PASS ON.

4. KING EXPLAINED FURTHER THAT BAHRAIN WILL SHORTLY BE SENDING 12 PILOT CANDIDATES TO JORDAN FOR BASIC FLYING TRAINING. IN ADDITION TECHNICAL PEOPLE AND OTHERS WILL BE TRAINED HERE AND HE WILL LOAN A SENIOR AIR FORCE OFFICER TO BAHRAIN FOR ADVICE IN FORMING AN AIR WING.

5. KING GREATLY VALUES HIS RELATIONSHIP IN GULF WHICH HAS BEEN OF SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT TO JORDAN AND TO US OVER THE YEARS. PRESUMABLY GULF STATES HAVE APPROACHED AND CONTINUE TO APPROACH HIM ON PROBLEMS OF THIS NATURE BECAUSE OF HIS LONG EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH THE US AND HENCE PRESUMED UNDERSTANDING OF ARRANGEMENTS. WHILE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE IN MY JUDGEMENT TO SUBSTITUTE KING OR THIS EMBASSY FOR DIRECT CONTACTS IN MANAMA IT WOULD ALSO BE A MISTAKE NOT TO PROVIDE KING AN ANSWER WHICH HE CAN PASS BACK TO BAHRAIN. SUGGEST THAT ANSWER INCLUDE IDEA THAT BAHRAIN SHOULD APPROACH US DIRECTLY AND AUTHORITATIVELY IN MANAMA IN ADDITION TO EXPLAINING EXACTLY WHAT MIGHT BE REQUIRED FOR THEM TO OBTAIN FMS CREDIT FROM THE US. JUDGEMENTS ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT WE WOULD PROVIDE SUCH CREDIT, IN MY VIEW, BEST LEFT FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH BAHRAIN. WOULD OF COURSE, WELCOME AND DEFER TO EMBASSY AMANAMA'S VIEWS ON ASPECTS OF REQUEST BEYOND THOSE DEALING WITH US-JORDANIAN RELATIONS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: A TIMELY RESPONSE TO KING'S REQUIRED AND INQUIRY.
PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

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